

A Risk Communication Revolution: Process vs. Event

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Sustaining Readiness through Strategic Partnerships

Risk Communication is NOT

- † "Educating and informing the public..."
- † "Developing messages..."
- † "Communicating scientific and technical information to non-technical audiences..."
- † "Writing a press release..."
- † "Information sharing..."

Risk Communication IS

- † Strategic planning
- † Strategic partnership development
- † Collaborative problem-solving
- † Power sharing ("risky")

Event vs Process

Informing and educating	Strategic planning
Developing messages	Collaborative problem-solving
Communicating technical information to non-technical audience	Developing strategic partnerships for discussion, dialogue and debate
Information sharing	Jointly identifying issues and solutions
Press release	Systematically identifying appropriate tools

Risk Communication REQUIRES

- † Early issue identification, analysis, and planning
- † Internal communication & coordination
- † Strategic internal and external partnerships
 - Who else in the organization is involved?
 - Who outside the organization is involved?
 - Who has interest in the outcome?

Risk Communication REQUIRES

- † Integration of risk communication processes into technical planning and resourcing
- † Flexibility
 - Anticipate
 - Analyze
 - Adjust

Risk Communication Tools

- † Need to fit the situation
 - Long-term, short-term, crisis?
 - † Environmental cleanup
 - † Provider/Patient
 - † Terrorist attack
 - Based on homework
 - † Research files, media reports, past interactions
 - † Interviews with key stakeholders to identify diverse interests, issues, concerns, involvement and communication needs
- † Are multiple to meet diverse needs
 - No “silver bullet”
 - One size does not fit all

Some, But Not All, Risk Communication Tools

Interactive

- Meetings
 - One-on-one
 - Small group
 - Large group
- Advisory Groups
- Round Tables
- Poster Sessions

Informational

- Mailing Lists
- Fact Sheets
- Status Reports
- Announcements
- Newspaper Ads
- Flyers
- Editorials

Strategic Planning: Long-term

† Environmental cleanup

- Time to build partnerships with stakeholders
 - † Environmental managers
 - † Technical support staff and other experts
 - † Other federal, state, tribal, local agencies and political leadership
 - † Public interests groups
 - † Impacted workers and communities
- Opportunities for collaborative problem-solving over time
 - † Stakeholder Involvement Planning
 - † Restoration and Citizen Advisory Boards

Strategic Planning: Short-term

† Provider/Patient

- Relationship established in a few minutes
- Interaction usually short duration
- Requires quick review of patient history
- Requires commitment to listen to patient concerns and involve him/her in diagnosis

† Deployment-related issues

- Homework to ensure most recent and accurate information on deployment exposures
- Informational handouts to accompany discussion with patient

Strategic Planning: Crisis

† Terrorist Attack

– Plan ahead

- † Identify and build strategic internal and external partnerships
- † Agree on roles and responsibilities
 - Sharing information
 - Connecting the dots
- † Identify other stakeholders (volunteers, public, media)
- † Establish agreed-upon coordination and communication networks
- † Develop contingency plans
- † Agree on language/terms

– **Maintain flexibility**

Maintain Flexibility

✦ Contingency Plans

- Can't anticipate everything
- Closely functioning team
 - ✦ Technical
 - ✦ Legal
 - ✦ Social/Political

✦ Action/Communication Strategies

- Issue
- Goals
- Constraints
- Actions/Responsibilities/Timing

Risk Communication: One Definition

- † The early and on-going process of building and maintaining relationships based on mutual trust and respect through dialogue with diverse audiences about complex issues.

Summary



- † Risk communication is:
 - a strategic planning process, not an event
 - collaborative problem-solving, not developing “messages” or putting out a press release
 - a team effort among strategic partners
- † Risk communication requires:
 - commitment
 - resources
 - expertise

Contact Information

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